



LIGHTWEIGHT ROWING

According to the International Rowing Federation, FISA, the rationale for creating the lightweight category (LWT) was "to encourage more universality in the sport especially among nations with less statuesque people". Essentially, the LWT category was created in an effort to counterbalance the fact that larger individuals have a small yet significant advantage when rowing, and thus tend to dominate the sport.

The international weight limits for the lightweight category are as follows:

Men: crew average 70 kg (maximum weight 72.5 kg)

Women: crew average 57 kg (maximum weight 59 kg)

Did you know? FISA is the oldest international sports federation in the Olympics. The acronym means *Federation Internationale des Sociétés d’Aviron*, but now we call it the International Rowing Federation.

Your Decision To Be A Lightweight Rower

If you're interested in becoming a lightweight rower, you will need to consider your body composition (both lean mass and body fat levels), body size (bone structure) and your usual or natural weight. You'll also need to consult a sports dietitian, physiologist and/or your doctor to determine if your body composition and the lightweight category is ideal and realistic for your physique, or if training and competing in lightweight will compromise your health. Explain the lightweight category to your doctor. Together, discuss whether you are indeed a "natural" lightweight. If you're still growing, this fact will have to be taken into consideration.

Talk about it with your coach so you fully understand the options available to you at your club. Are there other lightweights at your club with whom you can form a lightweight crew at a regatta? Will there be lightweight events at the regattas you attend? Some clubs that have junior rowers may not create crews for the junior lightweight category, as these youth rowers are still growing. The health of the rower is always of utmost importance.

If you do choose to row in the lightweight category, it will be important that you have guidance and support throughout your career. Ensure you communicate with your teammates, coach and family to educate them about lightweight rowing, and about the details and lifestyle choices around nutritious eating and weighing in before a race.